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INFO RUCNDMI/HUMANITARIAN DEMINING COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/I, PM/WRA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KHDP](#) [PARM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UNDP](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: DEMINING IRAQ: HUMANITARIAN PROJECTS RESUME

REF: BAGHDAD 2381 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In the 6-month Sisyphean effort to get the GOI to properly utilize humanitarian support for demining, it appears that a rock has finally crested the hill. On November 6, our largest Iraqi grantee, the Iraqi Mine Clearance Organization (IMCO), announced that it received GOI accreditation. This approval came after a constructive October 31 meeting that emboffs hosted at the Embassy with Deputy MinEnv Kamal Hussein Latif, MOD Follow-through Director MG Hadi al-Qaisi, and a UNDP representative. All sides resolved sticking points that had been preventing the accreditation of particular demining NGOs. On the operations front, MinDef Abd al-Qadir al-Mufriji consented November 9, on Pol-Mil MinCouns' urging, to approve more demining projects in future as long as the proposed operations did not involve borders or sensitive infrastructure. To underscore the need for swift action on such approvals, emboff and military liaisons met with MOD General Secretary LTG Salih Sarhan Hussein November 18, and he agreed to urge the MinDef to approve at least a small set of feasible, purely humanitarian projects very soon, which IMCO says they have received. END SUMMARY.

GRADUAL UN-FREEZING OF DEMINING

¶2. (SBU) MOD officials imposed a freeze on all demining activity at the end of 2008 but lifted it July 7, 2009 by signing an agreement with the MOEnv to share control of demining operations. However, since that time both ministries had failed to approve humanitarian demining projects. Meanwhile, the Embassy and UNAMI have coached the MOEnv and MOD towards cooperating better with each other, accrediting humanitarian demining organizations, and approving actual clearance projects (reftel). IMCO Director Zahim Mutar told Iraqi news media November 18 that IMCO would begin clearance work in Basra and Baghdad. Zahim clarified to emboff November 19 that IMCO is scheduled to start mine clearance south of Baghdad and quality control/assurance in Basra and Nissan. Noting his excellent relationship with MOEnv and calmer waters with the MOD, Zahim predicted that other projects were forthcoming. On December 2, IMCO was tasked to implement quality control/assurance tasks in the Canal Area of Baghdad, Abogharab oil field in southern Iraq, and the Al-Fao/Almaamer areas of Basra for areas recently cleared by the MOD. UNDP also expects more clearance work will be given to IMCO in 2010.

MEASURING PROGRESS

¶3. (SBU) COMMENT: The GOI has made progress incrementally in the field of mine action by: a) accrediting demining organizations (commercial and humanitarian), b) approving demining projects, and c) allowing NGOs such as IMCO to conduct mine risk education and quality control oversight.

The penultimate benchmark of progress is IMCO's recent approval to conduct humanitarian mine clearance, and the final benchmark will be met when IMCO once again removes and destroys landmines or unexploded ordnance in the course of a purely humanitarian project. Additionally, U.S. forces are receiving regular reports that the GOI, through the MOD, has also made considerable efforts in demining and clearing remnants of war in the area of the 10th IA by that unit. END COMMENT.
HILL